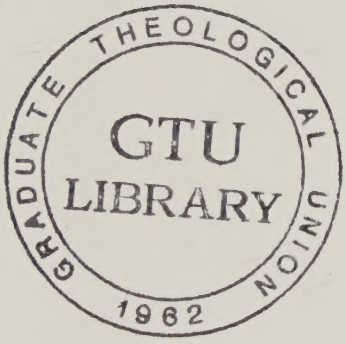
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The Mennonite Quarterly Review

Editor-in-Chief

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SANFORD CALVIN YODER, *President*
PUBLICATION OFFICE: SCOTTDALE, PENNSYLVANIA
EXECUTIVE AND EDITORIAL OFFICE: GOSHEN, INDIANA

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EDITORIAL

¶How difficult it is for good men to tell the truth can be readily demonstrated by an historical survey of the writing of Anabaptist history from Reformation times down to the present. It is true that the struggle to vindicate Anabaptism in history has been won in substance, and the task of modern Anabaptist historiography now is to thoroughly study the sources and produce a comprehensive and authoritative general history of the movement. In the first article in this issue of the Review, Professor Bender gives a rapid survey of earlier Anabaptist historiography and follows with a summary of the most recent progress in Anabaptist research, indicating some of the unfinished tasks that await the labors of the historian in this field.

¶Serious accusations of fanaticism and crime were made against the Anabaptists by their contemporary enemies. These accusations have been widely believed and repeated even in our day. One of the reasons for the wide credence these charges have acquired is the fact that they were sponsored by prominent and otherwise trustworthy men of such prominence as Ulrich Zwingli himself who had personal contacts with the movement in Zurich. John Horsch, in his usual thorough manner, has collected these accusations, examined them, and tested them as to their reliability on the basis of the source material. In his article in this issue he summarizes the results of his research. His findings on the basis of the evidence absolve the Brethren in every case of the charges made against them. The second and final instalment of this valuable discussion will appear in the next issue.

¶The most recent Mennonite migration, and one which has caught the eye of the world as few other migrations have, is the migration of Canadian and Russian Mennonites into the Paraguayan Chaco. So far no systematic summary account of this migration has appeared. The Review is fortunate to be able to present its readers with two able articles on this interesting movement by one who had spent considerable time in the Chaco and is well-acquainted with both colonies. Dr. Walter Quiring, the author of the series, is a German educator, himself a Mennonite from South Russia by birth, who is much interested in the new German (Russian) Mennonite colonies in Latin-America, and is now writing a book in which he reports his observations on the colonies in Paraguay and Brazil during his extended visit to these regions in 1932 and 1933. The first article contains the history of the establishment of the Canadian Mennonite colony in the Chaco, known as the Menno Colony. The second article will give an account of the establishment of the Fernheim Colony composed of immigrants direct from Russia.

¶In the Correction which appears in this issue, the Review willingly gives space to a revision of certain material presented in the biographical sketch of John Fretz Funk, which appeared in an earlier issue. The Book Reviews present three books dealing with the recent World War and the peace problem.

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EDITORIAL

One of the cardinal characteristics of the Mennonite Church from its foundation in Switzerland to the present day has been its dependence on the Holy Scriptures as the sole rule of faith and life. To-day the church is developing a system of Bible instruction in its Sunday Schools, Summer Bible Schools, and Winter Bible Schools which is designed to make the Bible more effective in the life and faith of its members. The pointed article in this issue by Clarence H. Benson on "The Menace of Bibleless Schools," which follows somewhat an address delivered at Goshen College some time ago, will strengthen the conviction that for full effectiveness the church must have a strong program of Bible instruction for its youth.

Very little biographical material on early American Mennonite leaders has been published, chiefly because so little source material is available. The REVIEW expects to publish a series of biographical sketches, of which the first one on William Rittenhouse, the first Mennonite minister in America, appears in this issue. Several years ago a sketch of Dielman Kolb appeared in the REVIEW. Sketches of other early Pennsylvania Mennonite leaders such as Jacob Godschalk and Heinrich Funk will appear in later issues.

One of the most stirring tales of recent Christian history is the story of the flight of the German Mennonite refugees from Russia in 1929 and their subsequent colonization in Brazil and Paraguay. In the REVIEW for October, 1930, and January, 1931 an able discussion of "The Background and Causes of the Flight" was presented from the pen of Professor B. H. Unruh, who was closely associated with the movement. In this issue Dr. Walter Quiring, who spent several months in the Chaco visiting the newly established colony there, gives a good factual summary of the settlement. This article is the companion to his article in the last issue of the REVIEW giving an account of the settlement of the Canadian colony in the Chaco. In succeeding issues the story of the settlement of the colony in Brazil, and also of a thousand or more of the refugees in Canada, will be presented.

In the second and concluding instalment of his refutation of accusations of fanaticism and crime against the early Swiss Brethren John Horsch devotes considerable space to a refutation of Zwingli's charges in his *Elenchus,* followed by a treatment of similar charges by Bullinger, and finally some charges by modern authors. In the light of the evidence produced it is difficult to see how future writers on the history of the Swiss Brethren can persist in the repetition of these charges, as has been the case even in very recent times.

In accord with the previously announced policy of the REVIEW further source-material for Mennonite history is presented in this issue with the publication of translations of three interesting "Early American Amish Mennonite Disciplines."

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EDITORIAL

One of the remarkable things about the history of the Anabaptist movement is the almost simultaneous rise of groups having identical principles in two widely separated areas, Switzerland and Holland. Historians have not yet agreed on the genetic relationship of the two movements. One school of thought holds that the Dutch Brethren arose out of influences originating in the Swiss Brethren movement and that Melchior Hoffmann was the bridge from Switzerland to Holland. Another school of thought holds that the Dutch movement was indigenous and arose apart from foreign influences. John Horsch, who begins his study of the origin of Dutch Mennonitism in this issue, holds to the latter view. The first instalment of his thorough study, which appears in this issue, deals with Obbe Philips as the founder of the Dutch Brethren group later called Mennonites, showing Philips' relation to Melchior Hoffmann's followers and giving an authoritative account of his breaking away from the Melchiorites. The material for this discussion is drawn chiefly from Obbe Philips' own writings, which are thus fully exploited for the first time in English.

Readers of the Review will recall the earlier articles by John Umble dealing with the early Mennonite Sunday Schools and settlements in Ohio, articles packed with much valuable factual material published for the first time in this extensive form, and made still more interesting and useful by interpretative insights which related the situation in early Ohio Mennonitism to the general course of Mennonite history and life as well as to the contemporary social and religious scene. It is now seventy years since the first Mennonite Sunday School was established in Ohio. Professor Umble's article in this issue, entitled "Seventy Years of Progress in Sunday School Work among the Mennonites of the Middle West" gives a splendid perspective on the development of religious educational activities in the Mennonite Church in the past two generations since that time, as he surveys with sympathetic and well-balanced analysis the early activities and points the way to still further progress in the future. Much progress has undoubtedly been made and much that is encouraging and inspiring can be learned from that progress, but in the meantime the world has moved on and the challenge of this modern world to modern Mennonitism is as great now if not greater than it was to our forefathers seventy years ago.

The Review is glad to be able to present again the annual statistical survey of attendance at Mennonite Schools and Colleges for the past year as it has been compiled by Dr. Silas Hertzler. In spite of the fact that several Mennonite schools report a distinct decrease in enrollment, the general trend seems to be toward an increase. Statistics for the current year show that this encouraging trend is continuing.